

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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R 040700Z FEB 74

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9452

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

FBIS OKINAWA

CONFIDENTIAL HONG KONG 1222

BANGKOK FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJECT: NEO-CULTURAL REVOLUTION LAUNCHED

REF: HONG KONG 0786 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. THE BURGEONING CAMPAIGN TO CRITICIZE CONFUCIUS AND LIN PIAO AND AROUSE THE MASSES REENFORCES OUR IMPRESSION THAT A LIMITED NEO-CULTURAL REVOLUTION IS BEING LAUNCHED IN THE FORM OF A NON-VIOLENT ANTI-RIGHTIST, ANTI-REVISIONIST CAMPAIGN. REVISIONIST CADRE AS WELL AS INTELLECTUALS ARE BROADLY THE TARGETS, BUT THERE IS POTENTIAL THREAT TO TOP LEADERS AND CURRENT POLICIES. END SUMMARY.

1. THE UPSURGE IN THE CAMPAIGN TO CRITICIZE CONFUCIUS AND

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LIN PIAO (WR 5) HAS REACHED IMPRESSIVE HEIGHTS OVER THE PAST

FEW DAYS AND PROMISES TO EQUAL OR SURPASS ANY PREVIOUS CAMPAIGN SINCE THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN FIXING THE ATTENTION OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE. PROVINCIAL RADIO BROADCASTS ARE VIRTUALLY DOMINATED BY COMMENTARY ON THE CAMPAIGN, INCLUDING REPORTS OF WIDESPREAD MASS RALLIES.

2. MEDIA, INCLUDING THE PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL OF FEBRUARY 2, ARE CALLING IT VARIOUSLY A THOROUGH GOING "REVOLUTION" IN IDEOLOGY, A "WAR," AND THE BEGINNING OF A "BATTLE" WITH THE AROUSED MASSES TAKING THE VAN. THE EDITORIAL'S INSTRUCTION TO "LEADING COMRADES AT ALL LEVELS" TO INVOLVE THE MASSES IN ATTACKING "ULTRA-RIGHTISM" MEANS THAT CADRE AS WELL AS INTELLECTUALS ARE GOING TO HAVE THEIR PERFORMANCE ONCE AGAIN SUBJECT TO PUBLIC CRITICISM. MAKING THE POINT THAT SOME CADRE WILL BE FOUND WANTING, PEOPLE'S DAILY TALKS OF "REVOLUTIONARY" CADRE AND INTELLECTUALS. CLEARLY SOME CADRE ARE NOT YET "REVOLUTIONARY." ANYONE WHO OBJECTS OR TRIES TO POSE LIMITS THUS RISKS PUTTING HIMSELF IN OPPOSITION TO THE CAMPAIGN.

3. WE NOTE THAT SCHOLAR FENG YU-LAN HAS APPARENTLY COME FORWARD AS EXPECTED (PEKING 0090; WR 4) WITH FURTHER EXPRESSIONS OF SELF CRITICISM (NCNA FEBRUARY3). WE ALSO NOTE THAT FENG WAS CORRECT BACK ON DECEMBER 3 WHEN HE SUGGESTED THAT MAO WAS PERSONALLY BEHIND THE CAMPAIGN (1973 HONG KONG 12330); THE PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL FLATLY STATES THAT THE CAMPAIGN IS INITIATED AND LED BY THE CHAIRMAN. BUT FENG WAS WRONG AT THE TIME WHEN HE OFFERED THE NARROW VIEW THAT THE NEW REVOLUTION WAS "WITHIN THE SPHERE OF THE HISTORY OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY." PEOPLE'S DAILY SIGNIFICANTLY EXPANDS THE SCOPE TO THE BROADER REALM OF "IDEOLOGY" AND PROVINCIAL BROADCASTS WARN THAT ANYONE WHO CONCEIVES OF THE CAMPAIGN AS A MATTER FOR ONLY "INTELLECTUALS" TO BE CONCERNED COULD NOT BE MORE WRONG.

4. COMMENT. FOR THE PAST SIX MONTHS WE HAVE BEEN WATCHING AND REPORTING DEVELOPMENTS LEADING UP TO THIS NEW REVOLUTIONARY AGITATION. IN THE DRAFT ASSESSMENT PREPARED AT YEAR'S END (INTENDED AS A COMPANION PIECE FOR HONG KONG 1130), WE CONCLUDED THAT THE GROWING ASSERTIVENESS FROM THE LEFT COULD LEAD TO SOMETHING LIKE A NEO-CULTURAL REVOLUTION UNDER CLOSELY GUARDED OFFICIAL CURBS AND WITH A DETERMINATION NOT TO LET THINGS GET CONFIDENTIAL

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OUT OF HAND AGAIN. WE SUBSEQUENTLY PUT FORWARD A SIMILAR ASSESSMENT BASED ON DEVELOPMENTS THROUGH LATE JANUARY (REFTEL). WITH THIS BACKGROUND TO OUR PERSPECTIVE HERE, WE WOULD NOW UPDATE OUR ASSESSMENT WITH THE VIEW THAT A NEO-CULTURAL REVOLUTION, IN THE FORM OF A NON-VIOLENT ANTI-RIGHTIST CAMPAIGN WHICH HITS AT CADRE FOR REVISIONIST BACKSLIDING, IS INDEED ACTIVELY UNDERWAY.

5. THE MOVEMENT MAY BE ABORTED OR DIVERTED, AND IT PROBABLY

HAS LIMITED OBJECTIVES. BUT WE CANNOT KNOW THIS NOW FROM ANY INFORMATION OR OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE PRESENTLY AVAILABLE HERE. THINGS LOOK TO BE UNDER CONTROL, NON-VIOLENT, AND MINIMALLY DISRUPTIMN. BUT WE ARE INCREASINGLY INCLINED TO HOLD OPEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT A POTENTIAL THREAT TO INDIVIDUAL LEADERS AND POLICIES,, ALBEIT STILL UNDEFINED AND NON-SPECIFIC. VEILED HINTS OF THIS POTENTIALITY RUN THROUGH SOME CURRENT MEC- :9.3,5 , AS WHEN KWANGTUNG PARTY SECRETARY WANG SHOU-TAO WARNED A TEN- THOUSAND STRONG RALLY IN CANTON JANUARY 29 THAOR "THIS STRUGGLE IS SURE TO ENCOUNTER SABOTAGE AND DISRUPTION FROM THE CLASS ENEMIES, AND WILL ALSO ENCOUNTER OBSTACLES OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER WITHIN OUR RANKS."

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